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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2009

#### In Today's Papers

U.S. Ambassador: 'Today Turkey is better prepared to face an economic crisis'  
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Vatan and Taraf reported Saturday the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, James Jeffrey, said Turkey is "better prepared to face the global economic crisis today, thanks to the structural reforms introduced following the economic crisis in 2001."

Addressing a luncheon hosted by the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK) in his honor, Ambassador Jeffrey said the 2001 crisis was internal whereas the current situation is global. "Because the Turkish economy is export-driven, it will undoubtedly face difficulties as international demand drops," he emphasized. Jeffrey underlined the importance of striking a deal with the IMF, and pledged the U.S. would help Turkey in the negotiations.

During the luncheon, Ambassador Jeffrey also said Turkey played a key role in Gaza, adding the U.S. was in touch with Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, UAE, and Israel in efforts for a long-term ceasefire. Papers also report that Ambassador Jeffrey also praised Turkey's contributions to the evolution of democracy in Iraq.

PM Erdogan Interview with Al-Hayat Newspaper  
Mainstreams Milliyet and Vatan report that PM Erdogan gave an interview to London - based Arabian Al-Hayat newspaper. Erdogan said " Hamas has emerged from an occupation. Hamas has the confidence of Palestinian people and won the elections in 2006. As a principal, we approach all Palestinian groups equally and we defend that Hamas should not be excluded from talks and should be treated equally with Fatah. We must not forget that Israel did not meet the cease-fire conditions while Hamas abided by the conditions for six months. Israel provoked Hamas by implementing the blockade and by putting so much pressure on Gaza. I am not against the Israeli people but their political leaders." Today's Milliyet reports that former Ambassador to Washington Faruk Logoglu said, "Erdogan's harsh statements against Israel damaged Turkey's role as a mediator." Milliyet also reports, "Foreign experts say that Turkey has lost its chance to mediate between Palestine and Israel."

Meanwhile, Sunday's Milliyet reported that the Jewish organization B'nai B'rith's deputy chair Dan Mariaschin asked for a gesture from Ankara to ensure the safety of Jews in Turkey. Sunday's Hurriyet report that an anonymous representative of an American-Jewish organization said, "Statements from Erdogan and other Turkish officials have contributed to the escalation of tensions. Jews in Turkey are scared and some are even considering leaving Turkey." The same person also said that, under these conditions, Turkey can no longer expect support from Jewish lobbies against the Armenian genocide lobbies in the U.S.

PM Erdogan's Message to President Obama  
Sabah, Yeni Safak, Milliyet, Zaman and others: Today's papers report that PM Erdogan sent a congratulatory message to U.S. President Barack Obama. In his message, Erdogan highlighted importance of the strategic partnership between Turkey and the U.S. for stability and invited Obama to the Alliance of Civilizations meeting to be held in Istanbul on April 6-7. Meanwhile, at a press-conference at the airport yesterday, FM Babacan said "I talked to Secretary Clinton on the phone on last Friday and she told me that she wants to send her special envoy George Mitchell to Turkey as part of his upcoming Middle East tour."

In a related story, mainstream Hurriyet reports U.S. Ambassador to Turkey James Jeffrey "sent important messages to Turkey" at the Duatepe Memorials in Sakarya. Columnist Fatih Cekirge writes, "Past US Ambassadors have visited places like the southeast, but Ambassador Jeffrey drew attention by visiting memorials to the great battle of Sarkarya." Cekirge says Jeffrey's message was "The U.S.

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will not bow to manipulations from anti-American circles in Turkey," whether these circles are "within the Islamists or the secularists."

In addition, the columnist notes that Jeffrey praised the Prime Minister's foreign policy advisor, Ahmet Davutoglu, for "playing a key role in peace in the region."

Yasin Aktay wrote in Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak: "The Jewish organizations in the U.S. are criticizing Turkey's stance on Gaza, calling PM Erdogan's remarks anti-Semitic, and blackmailing Turkey by threatening to cancel their opposition to the Armenian Genocide Resolution in the U.S. Congress. It makes me so sad that these statements from Jewish organizations make no mention of Israel's brutality in Gaza. The U.S. Jewish lobbies overestimate their power and they will not change Turkey's determination to stand up for the oppressed."

Omer Taspinar wrote in mainstream Sabah: "Turkey is losing the support of the Jewish lobby in the U.S. while the annual Armenian Genocide Resolution crisis is around the corner. The Armenian lobby has made significant progress toward the passage of a genocide resolution. If that happens, Ankara will face a serious blow to Turkish-American ties on the eve of the local elections. Ankara must immediately think outside the box for solutions."

Semih Idiz wrote in mainstream Milliyet (1/25): "Prime Minister Erdogan supports Hamas; at times he even acts like a spokesman for Hamas. Erdogan's approach (to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict) comes from his philosophy of political populism. But, because Erdogan sought to shore up domestic political support by making anti-Israel remarks and by choosing to support Hamas over Palestinian President Abbas, Turkey has lost its credibility as a mediator in the Middle East. Fortunately, President Gul has appropriately emphasized the role of Palestinian President Abbas in the bid for seeking solutions to the conflict. Gul's recognition of President Abbas brings balance back to Turkey's foreign policy trends."

Turkey-Iraq-U.S. to Set Up 'Joint Command Center' in Erbil  
Media outlets reported Saturday that Turkey, Iraq and the U. S. will establish a "joint anti-terror center" in Erbil to ensure border security. This effort seeks to secure the border region so the Turkish military will no longer need to carry out air strikes against PKK terrorist camps in northern Iraq. Iraqi Foreign Minister Hosyar Zebari visited Ankara Friday; during his joint press

conference with Foreign Minister Ali Babacan, Zebari said, "Erbil will be an important tripartite center for coordination in the field." Babacan announced the "high-level strategic cooperation council" between the Iraqi and Turkish governments will hold its first ministerial-level meeting in Istanbul in a few weeks.

#### Turkish Actor Draws Harsh Reaction over Cyprus Remarks

Media outlets reported over the weekend that popular Turkish actor Attila Olgac (of "Valley of the Wolves" fame) told a Kanalturk television program Thursday night that he shot dead 10 Greek Cypriots soldiers, including a prisoner of war, during his 1974 military service in Cyprus. Olgac's remarks were strongly criticized in the local media; mainstream Hurriyet called Olgac, "The Tactless Wolf." "This Was All We Needed," said mainstream Milliyet, lashing out at the actor for causing a crisis with Greece and Greek Cypriots at an already turbulent time. On Friday, Greek Cypriot government spokesman Stefanos Stefanou said Olgac's statements were "shocking," adding it was the first time anyone had made such an admission. "Olgac's account is a stunning confession," said Greek Foreign Ministry spokesman George Koumoutsakos, urging Turkey to cooperate to ensure that all the "missing" during the war are fully investigated. Riza Turmen, Turkey's former judge at the ECHR, said "This act resembles a war crime," adding that "states have the power to put its citizens on trial for committing such crimes." Olgac, however, publicly retracted his statement on Friday, "My words that I killed 10 people, including a prisoner, were untrue; they were

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said simply to attract attention to the brutality of war."

TV News:  
CNN Turk

#### Domestic News

- An avalanche kills ten mountaineers on Zigana Mountain in the Black Sea province of Gumushane.
- Prime Minister Erdogan, Foreign Minister Ali Babacan, State Minister Mehmet Simsek and Central Bank Governor Durmus Yilmaz will attend the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos from January 28-February 1.
- On Monday, Energy Minister Hilmi Guler will participate in a summit meeting on Nabucco pipeline in Hungary.
- Turkish Central Bank Governor Durmus Yilmaz said that an announcement for a loan deal with the IMF was "close." He noted the assistance should help the government repay debts and should assist companies who are coping with slowdown in demand.

#### International News

- World leaders and policymakers will gather at the annual World Economic Forum talks in Davos from January 28-February 1 to discuss how to overcome the global economic crisis.
- Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani charge each other with "tyranny" and "separatism."
- The Vatican has condemned President Obama's move to restore U.S. funding for family planning clinics abroad that carry out abortions.

JEFFREY